

Red Wolf Journal

2006 Red Wolf Recovery Program Highlights:

- 50 pups born to 11 packs
- Transmitters inserted into 3 pup litters
- RIT meets
- Recovery Program celebrates 20 years at ARNWR
- Red Wolf staff list
- Sandy Ridge update
- About the Captive Program
- A look at the Red Wolf Coalition

More inside . . .

Note: The "Red Wolf Journal" replaces the "Red Wolf News." Comments welcome.

Pup Transmitters

The Red Wolf Recovery Program wildlife biologists have been putting transponders in newborn pups for about the last five years. However, the transponders are used primarily for identification purposes and can be read like a bar-code. They do not operate as a transmitter that emits a radio signal.

Since pups are too small to be fitted with radio tracking collars, additional data on their dispersal and locations has not been available—until recently.

Just under two years ago, red wolf biologists inserted transmitters into three pup

litters. What they really needed now was someone in the field to monitor the signals more frequently than their time allowed.

Joey Hinton, a graduate student from Rice University in Texas, needed a thesis project. It worked out perfectly with Joey monitoring the transmitter signals during the summer of 2005.

Data reported:

- ❖ Pup dispersement range
- ❖ Age when pups disperse
- ❖ Traveling alone?
- ❖ Reasons for mortality

As biologists continue to monitor transmissions and collect data, future reporting will include this new information and behavioral trends.

Red wolf pup



Chris Lucash photo

New Pens for Sandy Ridge

Sandy Ridge is a red wolf holding facility located on the Alligator River National Wildlife Refuge. Winds from Hurricane Isabel on September 18, 2003, damaged all but one of the 14 pens. During the following year, only 5 to 6 were able to be made functional. Eventually the field crew was able to piece together other damaged pens to create a total of 8 functional pens. During the 2006 summer months, contractors repaired the six remaining pens and built two new ones, bringing the total number of pens to 16.



New pen - Leslie Schutte-Hildebrand photo

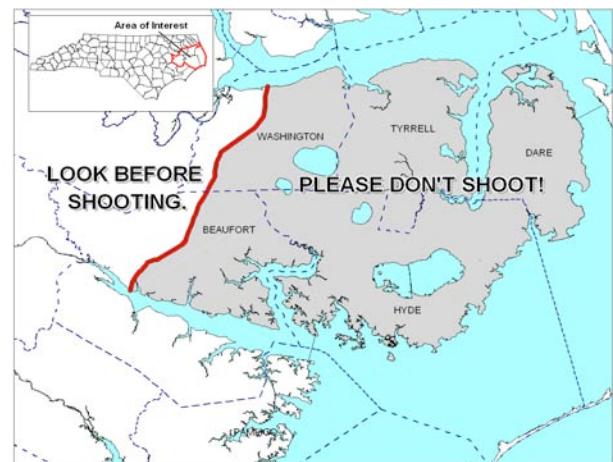
Fifteen pens measure 50' by 50' and one double pen measures 100' x 50' but can be divided if circumstances dictate. The repairs were completed in the nick of time, since during October, 2006, there were 20 canids needing space at Sandy Ridge.

Hunter Education Partnership

Gunshot mortality among the red wolf wild population has been on the rise. After some discussion about the problem with red wolf wildlife biologists, the Red Wolf Coalition Board of Directors, and the North Carolina Wildlife Commission, a decision was made to create a hunter education publication. The map below is one of four panels on a card that can be folded the same size as a hunting license. A pdf. file of the entire document can be found on www.fws.gov/alligatorriver/redwolf.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Red Wolf Recovery Program, Defenders of Wildlife, and the Red Wolf Coalition partnered to fund the printing of 20,000 cards. Target audiences will include hunter safety and education classes, hunt clubs, outfitters and hunting events, particularly in the 5-County Recovery Area. Red wolf wildlife biologists also carry a supply of these cards in their work trucks.

The card's basic message asks hunters not to shoot east of Highway 32. While it is open season on coyotes in North Carolina 12 months of the year, any canid seen in the counties of Beaufort, Dare, Hyde, Tyrrell and Washington, is very likely a red wolf. Since the Red Wolf Recovery Program already manages for coyotes in these 5 counties, the chances of killing a red wolf are extremely high. Gunshot mortality numbers will be monitored for any changes.



Recovery Implementation Team Met in October

The Recovery Implementation Team (RIT) is an independent panel of scientists from across North America who review the Red Wolf Recovery Program's field work, field plan, and data, prior to making recommendations at semi-annual meetings.

As a panel of accomplished scientists, the RIT offers ideas and recommendations on how best to manage and monitor red wolves and eastern coyotes, review current field activities and suggest ways to implement new projects and procedures.

The RIT met with Red Wolf Recovery Program staff in Nags Head, NC, on October 16th and 17th, 2006. Several topics were discussed such as:

- Causes of mortalities
- Monitoring pup activity
- Red wolf population statistics
- Adult population monitoring and tracking
- Fostering events
- Program directions for 2007
- Research paper publication dates

At this meeting another topic was presented:

"Is it time to consider organizing a Human Dimensions committee to complement the RIT?"

The idea was accepted and will be pursued at future meetings.

The next meeting of the RIT will be March 5th and 6th at the Nags Head, NC, location.

A bibliography of RIT published articles can be found on the ARNWR web site: www.fws.gov/alligatorriver/redwolf

Captive Population

The captive population is an integral component of red wolf recovery.

The Red Wolf Recovery Program may be celebrating 20 years at the ARNWR, but the captive breeding program, coordinated by Will Waddell, Point Defiance Zoo & Aquarium (PDZA), Tacoma, WA, will celebrate its 30th anniversary. The first litter of red wolf pups was born in captivity in 1977 at PDZA.

The captive program now consists of 38 facilities across the U.S. with a population of 163 red wolves (this number varies with each pup season.). A location list can be found on the red wolf web site.

Many of these sites are also part of the Species Survival Plan network..

Will Waddell represents the red wolf captive breeding program as a member on the RIT. FWS and the captive program work closely together to maintain accurate genetic data used to monitor and evaluate the health and progress of the red wolf species.

Red Wolf Coalition

The Red Wolf Coalition
Columbia, NC, Office



The Red Wolf Coalition (RWC) is a non-profit organization dedicated to promoting red wolf recovery through education, outreach and research.

The RWC partners with the USFWS and other organizations to expand red wolf knowledge at

events, through the media and RWC publications, howling safaris and web pages (www.redwolves.com).

The RWC will celebrate its 10th anniversary in 2007 and has a number of special projects and programs planned during this anniversary year.

Kim Wheeler, RWC Executive Director, can be reached at 252-796-5600 or via the web at kwheeler@redwolves.com.

Education/Veterinary Facility

For years, the red wolf wildlife biologists have conducted basic veterinary tasks under very rudimentary conditions: in garage/storage space in the ARNWR office building, in a small private shed and in the field whenever possible.

The situation is about to change. For nearly a year, Bud Fazio, Red Wolf Recovery Program Team Leader, has been searching for better conditions. Thanks to a grant that Howard Phillips, Refuge Manager, Pocosin Lakes NWR, applied for and received, a new education/veterinary facility is about to become a reality.

David Rabon, FWS, Ecological Services, has completed the Environmental Assessment, and

incorporated public comments. The Environmental Assessment and Finding Of No Significant Impact were signed and approved by Regional Director Sam Hamilton during Thanksgiving week.

The Department of Defense is working with FWS to negotiate construction contracts. The building design and floor plan has been conceptualized and will include an education area for FWS recovery program and RWC use.

A kiosk donated and built by an Eagle Scout Troop, will be installed outside the facility, further educating the public about red wolf recovery in northeastern North Carolina.



Current garage space



Proposed new facility

Making Tracks

The semi-annual "Far Traveler" red wolf educator's workshop was held on October 20, 2006, at Pocosin Lakes National Wildlife Refuge in Columbia, NC. Usually class size is limited to 15 students, but in order to accommodate a request from Duke University students, attendance was expanded to 23 participants.

The day began with introductions, a viewing of the video "Recovering a Species," a Power Point presentation, and activities from the "Far Traveler" K-8 curriculum guide.

The highlight of every workshop, according to the evaluations, is the afternoon field trip led by red wolf wildlife biologist, Chris Lucash. Students are always excited to talk

with a with a field biologist who gives them firsthand knowledge of field work as it supports red wolf research.

Earlier in the day, Chris located red wolf tracks for the group to visit in the afternoon. Each student was provided with materials to cast tracks, which can later be used as a teaching tool.

Workshops are held twice a year, in the spring and fall. Each educator leaves with a "Far Traveler" teacher notebook with the curriculum guide, handout suggestions, the video they watched and a howling CD.

Workshop participants in the field



Making tracks



Outreach Corner

- **2006 Howling Safaris ended December 9. Over 1,000 people participate annually.**
 - **Red wolf education programs are presented in schools, to community groups, in libraries and parks and recreation facilities.**
 - **Discovery Boxes continue to travel the U.S. as education tools.**
 - **Web page updates are submitted to the ARNWR webmaster.**
- Please check out this site:**
www.fws.gov/alligatorriver/redwolf
- **Media inquiries are encouraged and have resulted in newspaper and magazine articles, television community service announcements, and updates on video productions.**
 - **A new red wolf brochure was published in January, 2007.**

Volunteers and the red wolf caretaker help on an as-needed basis and have assisted with a number of projects including event support, "howling" for the safaris, organizing a photo library, organizing the red wolf files and archives, updating the slide collection, and a lot of clerical work.

Howling safari schedules are available on the ARNWR web page/red wolf link. This web site contains bibliographies for student research as well as for general reading to enhance red wolf knowledge.

The Red Wolf Recovery Program is present at events throughout the year, reaching nearly 20,000 people.

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

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2007 – Red Wolf Recovery Program celebrates 20 years at ARNWR

It is hard to believe that nearly twenty years have passed since the first reintroduction began in 1987 with the release of four pairs of red wolves into the Alligator River National Wildlife Refuge. A year later, the first litter of red wolf pups was born in the wild on the Refuge.

At this same time, an island propagation project began on Bulls Island, South Carolina, in an attempt to give red wolves some wild experience before release into mainland reintroductions in North Carolina.

Today, approximately 100 wild red wolves live in 15 known packs in the 1.7 million acre recovery area. For the past three years, 40-50 pups have been born annually in the recovery area, keeping biologists busy tracking their locations.

**Red Wolf Recovery Program Staff**

Bud Fazio, Team Leader
Art Beyer, Wildlife Biologist and Field Coordinator
Michael L. Morse, Wildlife Biologist
Chris Lucash, Wildlife Biologist
Ford Mauney, Wildlife Biologist
Ryan Nordsven, Wildlife Biology Technician
Kathy Whidbee, Administration & Field Assistant

Diane Hendry, Red Wolf Outreach Coordinator

*The red wolf caretaker is a temporary position often filled by university students and recent graduates.

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